

# **The Nursing Archives and Special Collections**

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS  
LOWELL  
Center for Lowell History**

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**PATRICK J. MOGAN  
CULTURAL CENTER**

**40 French Street  
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852  
(508) 934-4997**

**HOURS:**

**Monday through Friday 9 am - 5 pm  
Saturdays 9 am - 3 pm**

# The Nursing Archives

## Purpose:

Recognizing the important role of nursing and health care in Lowell and the Merrimack Valley, the Department of Nursing and Sigma Theta Tau International - Eta Omega Chapter established the Nursing Archives at the Center for Lowell History.

The purpose of the Nursing Archives is to support and promote the study and research of health care through the records and collections of the University, health care organizations and health professionals.

## History:

In the early 1800s, the Merrimack Valley developed into a textile, shoe, and tanning industrial center.

During this time, Lowell's community leaders strongly advocated that the textile mills support quality working conditions.

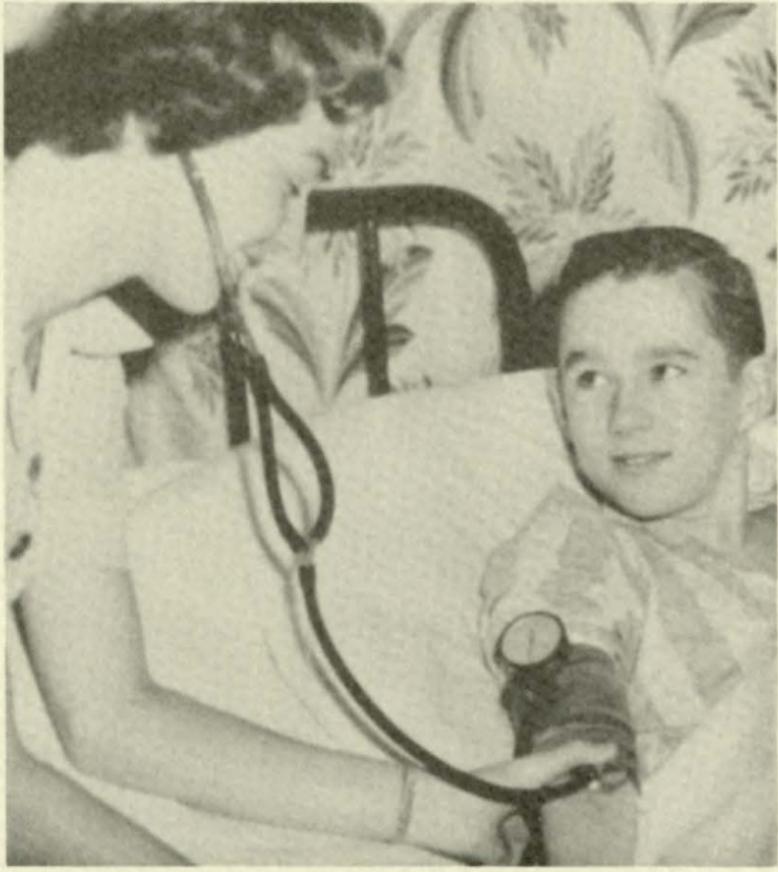
Eleven textile companies responded by sponsoring America's first industrial hospital. The Lowell Corporation Hospital, later to be named St. Joseph's Hospital, opened in 1839 with the goal of providing health care for textile workers.

However, there was a rapidly growing immigrant population who neither worked for the mills nor had the funds to pay for hospitalization. Religious and charitable organizations took the responsibility for providing care for those who were not employed at the mills.



DOROTHY PHINNEY, 22  
FIRST NURSE FROM LOWELL  
IN SPANISH WAR  
DIED AUG. 1898

Courtesy of Lowell General Hospital



Courtesy of Lowell Visiting Nurse Association

Father John O'Brien and the Sisters of Charity founded St. John's Hospital in 1867. The city's population rapidly grew in the late 1800s. The demand for health services outpaced the supply available from the two existing hospitals. As a result, Lowell General Hospital was opened in 1893 to accommodate the growing demand.

In 1909, two nurses, of the Middlesex Women's Club, endeavored to care for the sick in homes and teach personal hygiene and home sanitation. By 1915, the staff had grown from two to ten and merged its home nursing services with the Young Women's Hospital Guild. The new organization became known as "The Lowell Guild." In 1928, The Lowell Guild changed its name to the Lowell Visiting Nurse Association. Records and memorabilia from the Lowell Visiting Nurse Association are included in the Nursing Archives.

In the late 1800s, the three hospitals opened training schools for nurses. In 1887, Lowell Corporation Hospital opened its school of nursing, followed by St. John's in 1892 and Lowell General in 1893. The schools were designed to train a nursing work force to supply the hospitals.

Nursing education in recent decades has moved into the mainstream of higher education. Today, the University of Massachusetts at Lowell is a distinguished public university that prepares professional nurses for a variety of settings, such as hospitals, community agencies, homes, and long-term care facilities. Specialized graduate programs prepare nurse practitioners and nurse administrators. In 1975, the University of Lowell began the first gerontological nurse practitioner program at the master's degree level in the United States.

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## **THE PATRICK J. MOGAN CULTURAL CENTER**

The mission of the Patrick J. Mogan Cultural Center is to "tell the human story found in the history of the United States as an industrial nation, especially by concentrating on the lives of the working people of Lowell, Massachusetts."



Courtesy of Lowell Visiting Nurse Association

Any organization, group or individual who is interested in donating artifacts, historic items or funds should contact:

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